

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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O 041156Z APR 75 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 164

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 5983

EXDIS

STATE PASS SECDEF AND CJCS

MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AMER, CB

SUBJECT: EVACUATION OF PHNOM PENH

REF: STATE 075058

1. THE SCENARIO DESCRIBED IN PARA 1 OF REFTEL WOULD, IF EXECUTED, RISK THE LIVES OF THOSE PERSONNEL WHO WOULD COME WITHIN THE CATEGORY OF "THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO ADMINISTER ONGOING AID SHIPMENTS." THE MINUTE WE BEGAN TO EVACUATE KHMER EMPLOYEES OF THE USG AND THEIR FAMILIES AS WELL AS OTHER ELIGIBLE KHMERS WHOSE LIVES WOULD BE IN DANGER AS A RESULT OF A KC TAKE-OVER, WE WOULD BE SIGNALING TO ALL OF PHNOM PENH THAT WE WERE ABOUT TO EVACUATE TOTALLY THE AMERICAN MISSION AND THE OTHER CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE FOR WHOM WE ARE RESPONSIBLE.
2. THE EAGLE PULL EVACUATION PLAN WHICH HAS FORMED THE BASIS FOR THIS MISSION'S E&E PLANNING FOR A LONG TIME, DID NOT UNTIL RECENTLY INCLUDE THE CATEGORY OF KHMER EMPLOYEES OF THE USG. THIS CATEGORY WAS RECENTLY

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ADDED ON INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED FROM THE DEPARTMENT.

THE CATEGORY "KEY INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL" ORIGINALLY ENCOMPASSED ONLY A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF PERSONS AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILIES, ALTOGETHER NUMBERING FIFTY OR LESS. THESE KIP'S WERE MARSHAL LON NOL AND OTHERS ON THE LIST OF SEVEN PERSONS LABELED BY THE KC AS "TRAITORS" MARKED FOR IMMEDIATE EXECUTION AFTER THE TAKING OF PHNOM PENH. ALSO ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT, WE WERE ASKED TO CONSIDER EXPANDING THIS CATEGORY TO INCLUDE OTHER KHMERS WHOSE LIVES MIGHT BE IN DANGER FOLLOWING A KC MILITARY VICTORY.

3. THE CATEGORY "KEY INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL" TODAY WOULD INCLUDE PERSONS SUCH AS THE ACTING PRESIDENT, LTG SAUKHAM KHOY; THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER, HANG TUN HAK; THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF FANK, LTG SAK SUTSAKHAN; DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PAN SOTHI; FORMER PRIME MINISTER SIRIK MATAK; AND SO FORTH. THESE WOULD BE THE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES WOULD BE IN GREATEST JEOPARDY AND WHO WOULD THEREFORE HAVE TO BE EVACUATED FIRST. THEREFORE PARA 2 OF REFTTEL WOULD BE NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO EXECUTE SINCE THERE WOULD IN EFFECT NO LONGER BE A GKR TO INFORM THAT WE WERE TAKING THIS TEMPORARY, PRUDENT STEP, AND THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A MINIMUM STAFF HERE TO ADMINISTER ONGOING AID SHIPMENTS. AT THAT POINT THE GKR AND THE FANK WOULD HAVE COLLAPSED TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, AND THERE WOULD BE NO EXISTING ENTITIES TO WHICH SUCH AID COULD BE DELIVERED.

4. AS ADMIRAL GAYLER WROTE IN HIS MESSAGE 030150Z APR 75: "NOBODY OWNS AN OPERATIONAL CRYSTAL BALL, BUT FOR THESE REASONS I THINK TIME AVAILABLE FOR A SMOOTH EVACUATION IS EXTREMELY SHORT. IF WE HANG ON TOO LONG WE WILL HAVE A DIFFICULT AND MESSY OPERATION. WE MAY EVEN END UP WITH AMERICANS KILLED OR POW. ALMOST CERTAINLY WE WILL FAIL TO GET OUT MANY OTHERS WE SHOULD RESCUE."
DEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF AND JCS. SECRET
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